



## REDD+ MRV and reference levels: A synthesis of lessons learned

October 2016  
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WWF Forest and Climate



# Background

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- WWF has been working since 2009 on MRV design, development, implementation and capacity building
- Norad funded
- Lead by WWF's teams in each country, with the support and coordination of WWF's Forest and Climate team
- The focus has been on
  - Finding simple yet efficient approaches to deliver MRV and RELs
  - Building capacities for the long run
  - Collecting lessons learned during the process
  - Using the lessons learned to inform each country process as well as share them

# HOW & WHERE



**Indonesia**



**DRC**



**Peru**



**Colombia**



**Guyana**





# Forests and REDD+ Outcomes from COP21

**Preamble**

**Art. 2:** Purpose

**Art. 3:**  
Communication  
of NDCs

**Art. 4:** Mitigation  
(sinks)

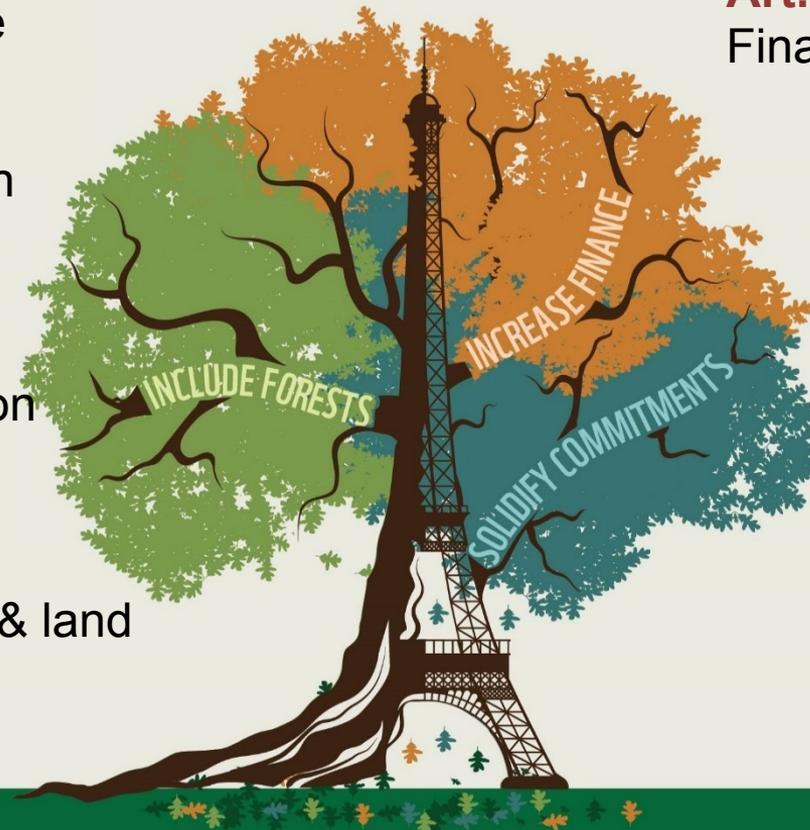
**Art. 5:** Forests & land

**Art. 13:**  
Transparency

**Art. 9:**  
Finance

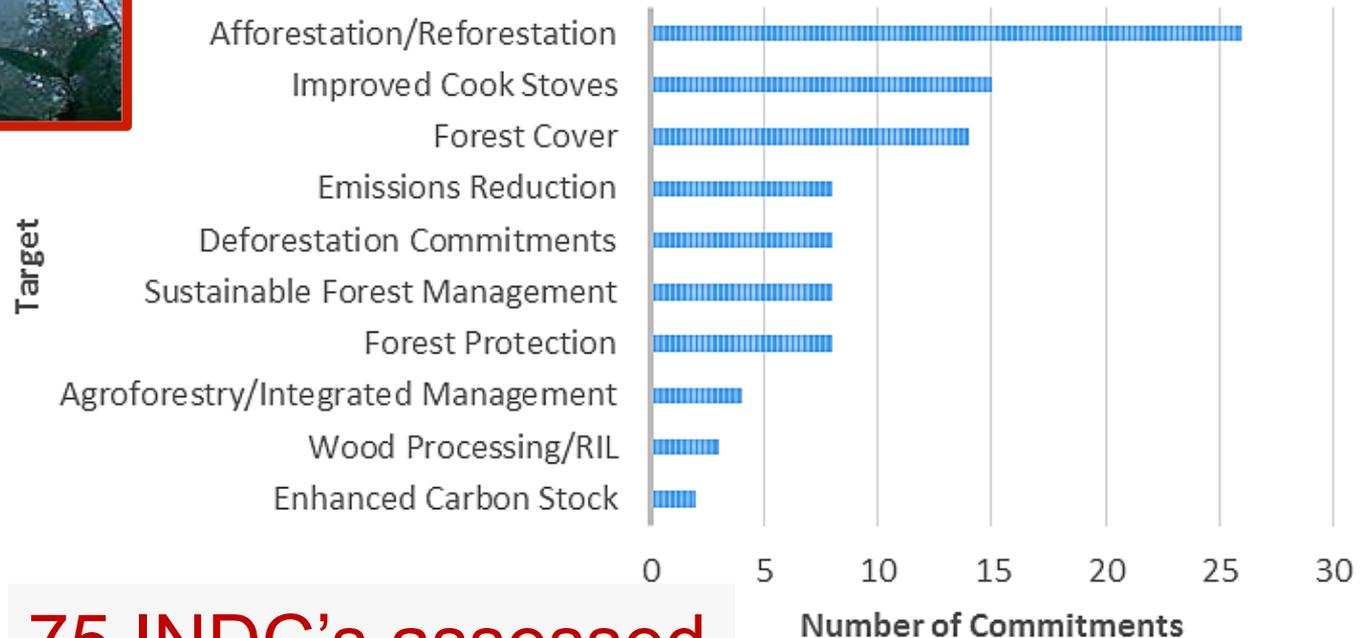
**\*Adopted decisions:**  
Par. 55 of Finance  
decision

**Art. 6:**  
Sustainable  
Development  
Mechanism



# Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC's)

## COMMON FOREST TARGETS



75 INDC's assessed

INDC ANALYSIS:  
AN OVERVIEW OF THE FOREST SECTOR

Karen Petersen and Jessica Braña Varela

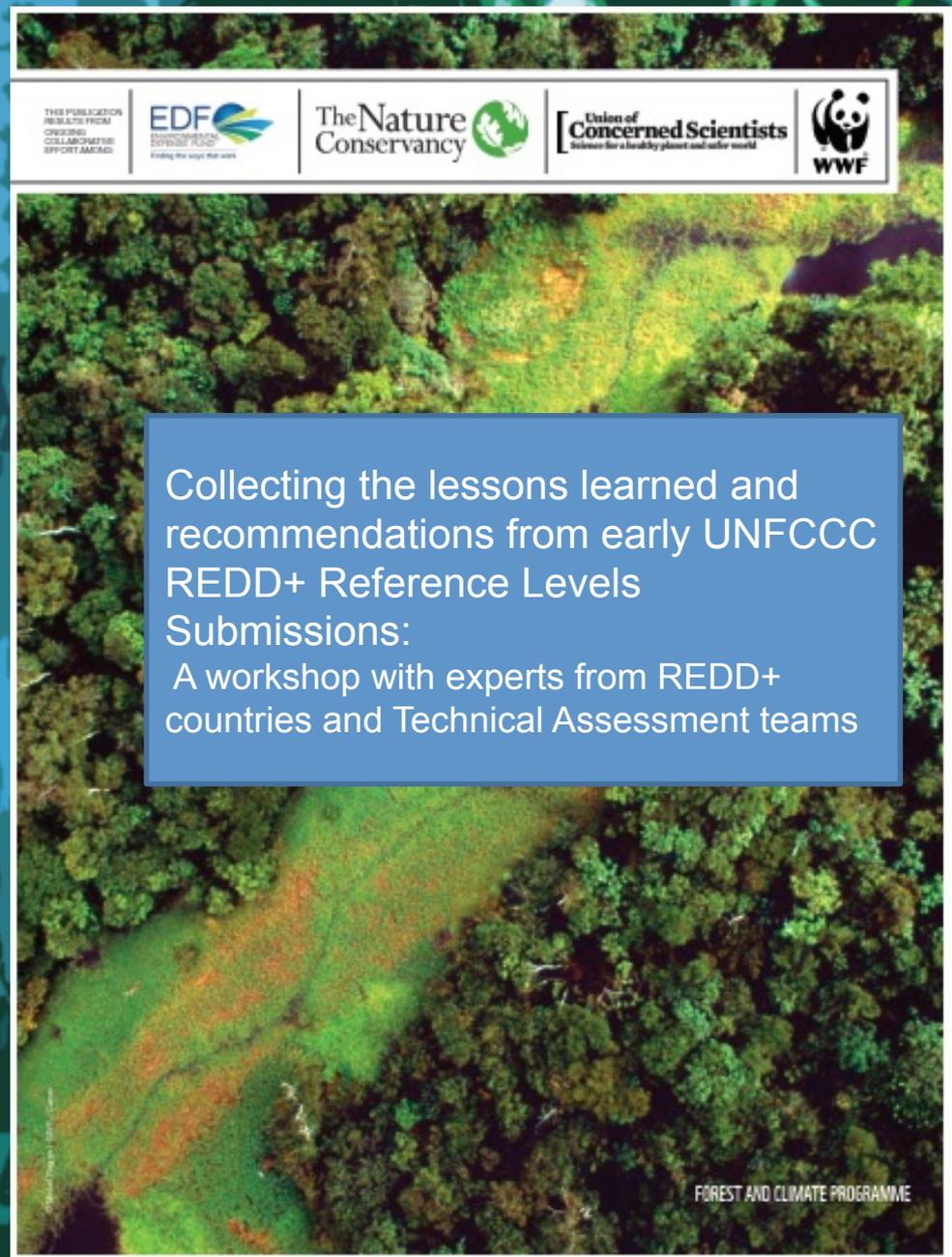
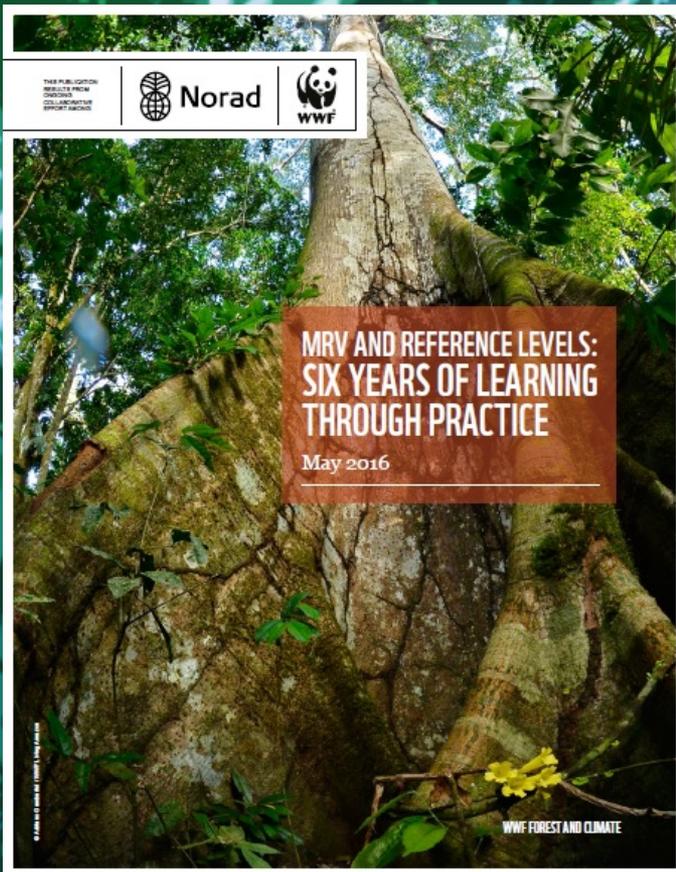


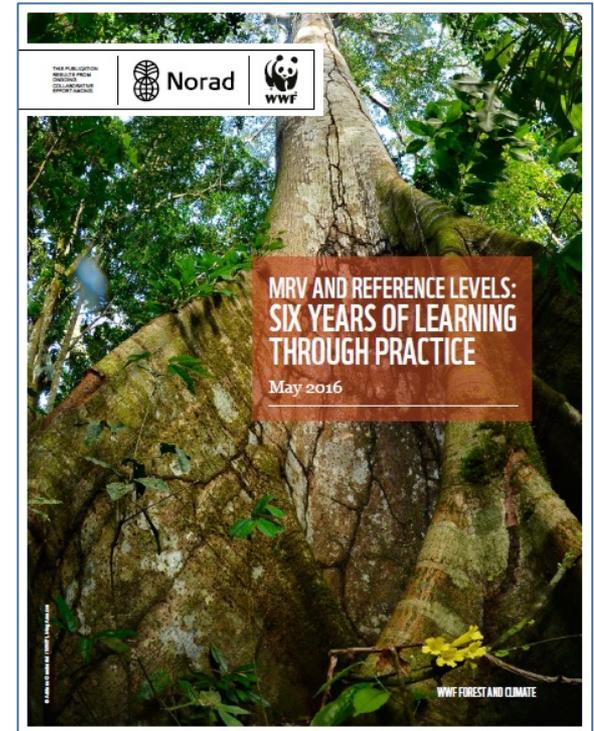
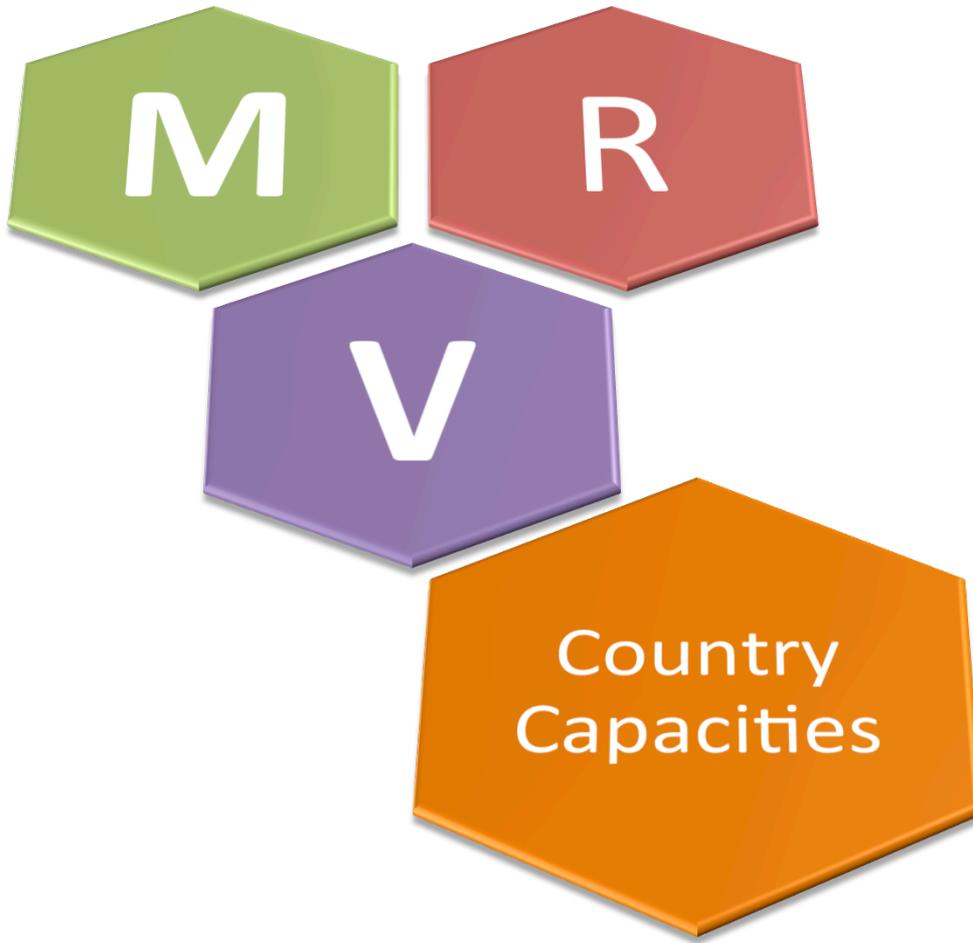
# REDD+ FRELS

15 countries have submitted their Reference Levels so far:

- Brazil
- Chile
- Colombia
- Congo
- Costa Rica
- Ecuador
- Ethiopia
- Guyana
- Indonesia
- Malaysia
- Mexico
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Viet Nam
- Zambia







**Indonesia**



**DRC**



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**Guyana**



## M: Activity Data

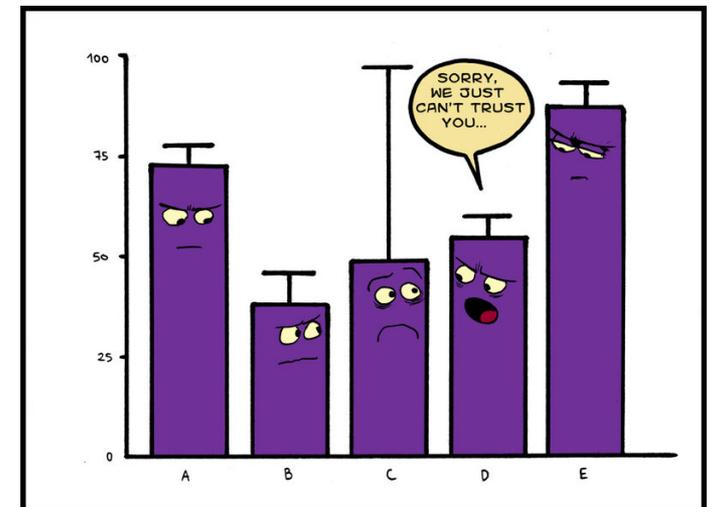
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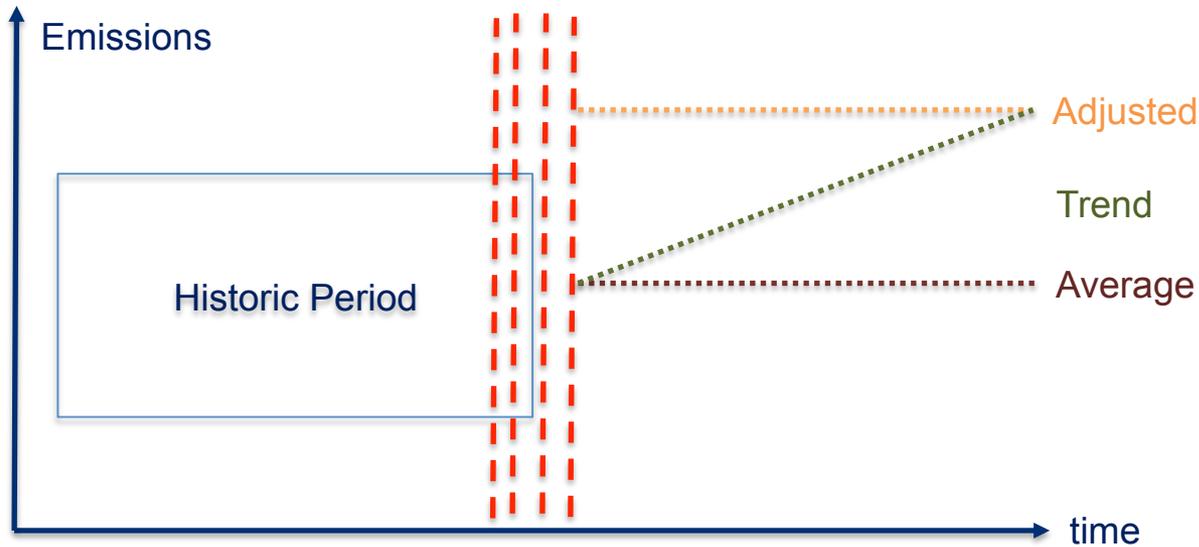
1. **Change Data:** ...context is essential (LC vs LU)
2. **Uncertainty of Activity Data:** high uncertainty for change data as the smallest portion of the landscape.
3. **Forest Definition:** Need of clear relation between definition dimensions and data used to inform condition (minimum area, %tree cover, height)
4. **Reminder: estimates to be reported can be produced using sample data:** Wall to wall are ideal for implementation but not essential for reporting. **However, Consistency between REL and MRV approaches is paramount** (same for validation...see later)
5. **The special case of Degradation:** Learning by doing process (trial and error)

>> Remember to use forest definition

# M: Emission Factors

1. **National Forest Inventory:** Optimized design (back to stratification but...ideally multipurpose).
2. **Stratification:** Remember what data will be used for and how (purpose built).
3. **Uncertainty of EF's:** Identify sources, estimate, aggregate to strata, report transparently
4. **Carbon maps:** not-essential...good for planning...plots always needed.





1. **Reference Levels:** A data informed political decision.
  - a. Several reference levels can result from the process:
    - a “historical” reference level,
    - a performance reference level and
    - a payment reference level.
  - a. Scale:
    - Needs to be built at significant scale for national impact.



# V: Verification/Validation

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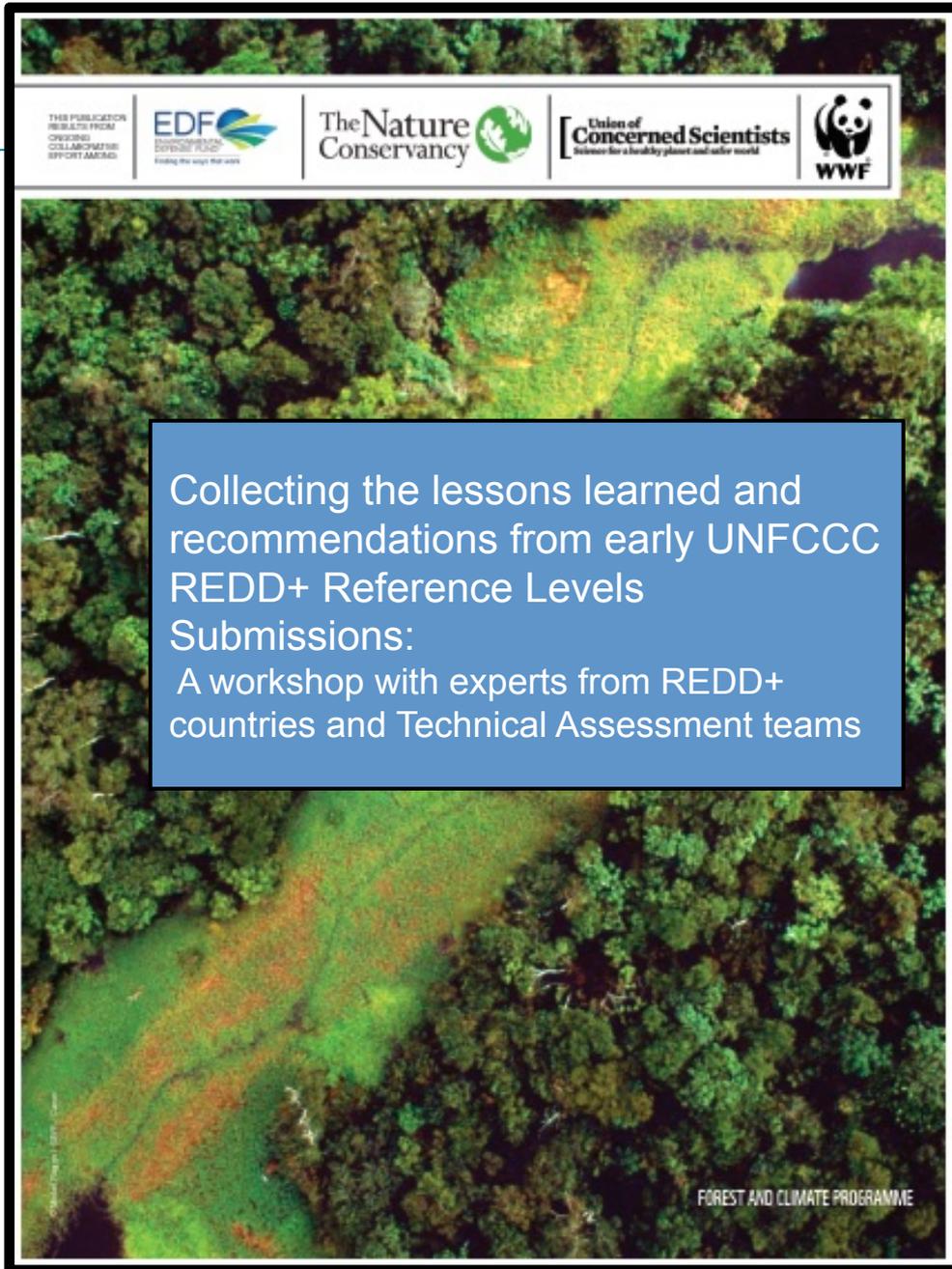
1. **A learning process for both sides:** ...all involved should keep that in mind!
2. **Lowering Uncertainty Estimates  $\neq$  Validation....**  
Its about transparency and the complete picture.
  - Need to learn how to deal with uncertainty
  - Internal validation as means to comply with transparency and safeguards

# Country Capacities

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1. Use the tools you know and understand
  - In face of the 5 principles ( **Consistency, Transparency, Comparability, Completeness, and Accuracy**), use of well known methods seems to be the safest bet.
2. Aim towards sustained capacity...Think beyond the current project! (this goes for both donor and implementing countries)
3. The MRV process needs to become part of national institutions.
4. Participation in the MRV Process: A means to build capacity to engage and implement

NOTE: WWF has made as a main aspect of its strategy



THE PUBLICATION  
RESULTS FROM  
CRITICAL  
COLLABORATIVE  
SUPPORTING



Union of  
Concerned Scientists  
Science for a healthy planet and safer world



Collecting the lessons learned and  
recommendations from early UNFCCC  
REDD+ Reference Levels  
Submissions:  
A workshop with experts from REDD+  
countries and Technical Assessment teams

FOREST AND CLIMATE PROGRAMME



# Workshop in Bonn, Germany in May, 2016

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Dr. Jim Penman

- Workshop brought together reference levels **creators and assessors as a group for the first time** (15 countries).
- Participants agreed that other countries could **benefit from sharing information about challenges and lessons learned.**



# UNFCCC FRL Guidelines: 13/CP.19 & 12/ CP17. Annexes

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Criteria used for conversations based on relevant decisions:

- Information used
- historical data
- details on national circumstances
- Transparent, complete, consistent, and accurate information, including methodological information
- Pools and gases, and activities included
- (Reasons for omitting a pool and/or activity from FRL construction)
- The definition of forest used for the construction of FRL

# Lessons: Transparency and Accuracy

- Transparency underpins the credibility of reference levels and REDD+ itself: REDD+ countries should be acknowledged for efforts to provide full access to all relevant information.
- Donors and REDD+ countries should work together on harmonized approaches to deal with high uncertainties, as with FCPF conservativeness factors.
- Efforts to remove bias in estimates are potentially more important than efforts to increase precision.
- A well-designed stratification approach may be an important tool in efficiently reducing uncertainty of estimates.





# Lessons: Consistency and completeness

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- Though not required, REDD+ countries may benefit by maintaining consistency between national inventories, MRV systems, and reference levels. This may require careful planning in advance.
- Current guidance to identify the most significant sources/sinks may help REDD+ countries develop robust and complete reference levels.
  - REDD+ countries can use default values and country specific activity data to fill in data gaps for significant sources/sinks, such as degradation.
  - Due to the high potential for leakage, countries should provide as much information as possible about emissions in areas or activities not included in the reference level.
- Different interpretations for “complete”.



# Lessons: Comparability and the assessment process

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- Though comparability is **not** assessed, donors may have an interest in understanding the relative scope and quality of reference levels across countries.
- This is a learning by doing process both for countries and TA teams
- To accelerate the learning-by-doing process, REDD+ countries could include additional information about new activities or areas in supplemental annexes and request comments on the annex from technical assessors.
- Additional resources may be needed in order to maintain and expand the pool of qualified technical assessors.
- REDD+ countries may need assistance in building capacity and ownership, to avoid an overreliance on consultants.



# Key takeaways (1)

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- Reference levels should be assessed as a complete construct, not as the sum of the parts.
- In addition to supporting results, donors may need to provide **finance to help REDD+ countries collect and improve data**, especially **for gaps** such as degradation
- Donors and REDD+ countries need to find a **balance** in accepting current levels of **uncertainty**, while making progress toward **improving data quality, completeness** of coverage, and **cost-effectiveness** of MRV.
- The contributions from REDD+ activities, as measured against the assessed reference levels, may be **key pieces** of information **for measuring global progress toward the goals of the Paris Agreement**.
- The Readiness phase continues and now requires donors to get ready



# Key takeaways (2)

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- **It's all about transparency:**

“You can have the best quality data in the world and not be transparent about it and propose illegitimate ways of using it to define reference levels, reporting emissions reductions or benefit sharing whereas another country with very basic data with high uncertainty levels can still propose sound use approaches that result in legitimate proposals.”

- **MRV is a national endeavor...**

Compartmentalization of MRV is not a good idea



# Caution Warranted

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- There are possible concerns about degree to which FRLs uphold climate integrity.

GAP between “Historic” and proposed FRELS

- Real reductions depend on political will to undertake mitigation activities and to integrate REDD+ activities into other national commitments.
- National REDD+ plans could help address climate integrity concerns.
- Donor countries and international organizations can support climate integrity by making FRLs the basis for negotiations and by providing funding for country improvement.



# Thank you

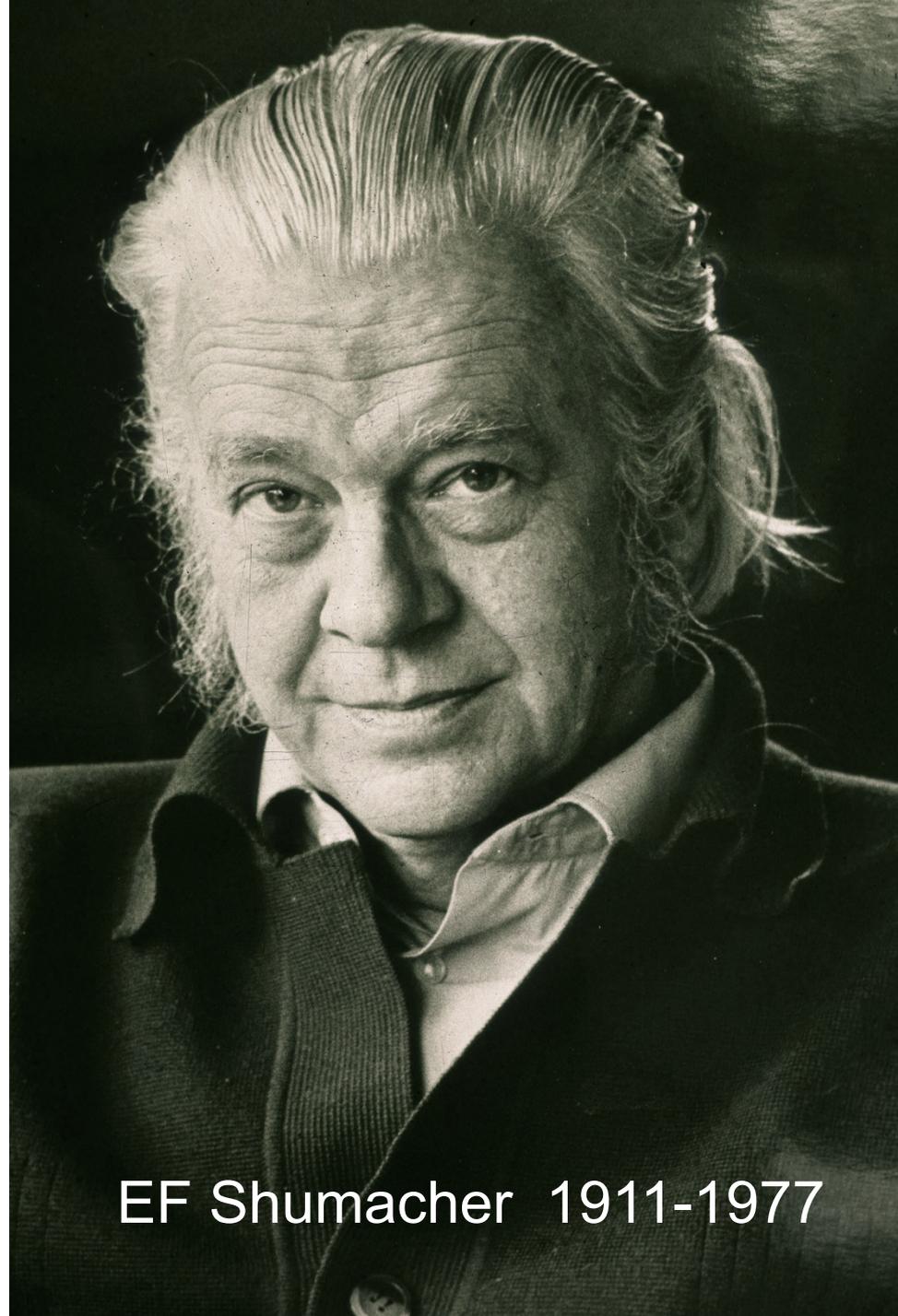
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Please visit [www.panda.org/forestclimate](http://www.panda.org/forestclimate) to learn more about WWF Forest and Climate.

Connect with us on Twitter [@WWFForestCarbon](https://twitter.com/WWFForestCarbon).



Any intelligent fool can make things bigger, more complex, and more violent. It takes a touch of genius -- and a lot of courage -- to move in the opposite direction.



EF Schumacher 1911-1977



**+100**

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WWF is in over  
100 countries, on  
6 continents

**1961**

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WWF was founded  
In 1961



**+5M**

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WWF has over  
5 million supporters

**+16M**

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WWF has over  
16 million followers on  
Facebook, Twitter and  
Google+